

Separating the Impure From the Prophetic

Thirty years ago, prophetic ministry dramatically altered the course of my life. God sent a seasoned **prophetic** woman all the way from Israel to Dallas in order to have a three-minute telephone conversation with me via a radio program.

This encounter completely changed my career and life expectations and thrust me into **ministry**. It is an example of the power of true prophetic ministry—something that is desperately needed in difficult times.

But when I look at the broad spectrum of **prophetic ministry** today, I become concerned. I fear that a lot of us have gone off course, and it is going to take more than a shift in attitude to get us back.

It is going to take sweeping, all-inclusive prophetic reformation—reformation that begins within prophetic individuals, not the church. The way prophetic people view themselves must radically change first, and only then will the church change the way it views prophetic ministry.

For too long we have embraced the following erroneous beliefs. They are common in the church today, and all of them work against the prophetic.

It's not OK to "**prophecy**" whatever we want in the name of the Lord. Too many "prophetic" words inundate the Web, go out via email and "appear" in videos all over the Internet. If all of them were mature and accurate words from the Lord, I would have little to say here, but most are not. And no one is addressing the error; words that do not come to pass are simply forgotten instead of corrected.

It seems as if we are living in denial, believing that God does not care when we attach His name to a word He has not actually spoken. Do we not understand that this is taking God's name in vain?

Grace is a license for sin. Many of us have developed a habit of managing sin rather than seeking to live a holy life. Grace is touted as the trump card, and anyone who sees grace in a different light is automatically discounted as being legalistic or as having a spirit of self-righteousness.

But at what point does the embracing of grace turn into the endorsement of ungodly behavior?

A person is defined by his gifts. All of us have probably heard about prophetic individuals who are supposedly essential to a particular move of God, but when we make any man or woman the foundation for God's actions, we are coming perilously close to turning the gift into an idol. This belief has resulted in an entire generation of young men and women who base their identity so heavily on their gifts that when they are questioned about their words or behavior, they act as if God Himself is being called on the carpet.

When did the gift of the **prophet** become more important than the purity of the Word?

Gifts Are More Important Than Character

The weighty emphasis placed on various gifts promotes the idea that gifting is more important than character. In one prophetic magazine, the editor wrote that it is unbiblical to believe that a person's character is more important than his **gift**—but his statement is clearly not correct.

Character has several facets, not the least of which is love. The apostle Paul wrote that without love we are nothing, no matter how accurate our **prophetic gift** (1 Cor. 13:2). His statement alone is biblical proof that character is more important than gifting.

Furthermore, we are told in Matthew 7:22-23 that many will prophesy and do signs and **wonders**—all the while living in rebellion. They will bring genuine healing, prophetic words and deliverance to others, but in the end, God will say they are lawless and that He doesn't know (have relationship with) them.

Unfortunately, it seems as if we are living in a Samson-esque era in which **gifts** are embraced and character is overlooked. We have promoted the gift over knowing God and His ways, and in so doing, we have become primed for the Antichrist's appearance. What will we do when he comes and performs actual, powerful miracles? Will we ourselves be part of the great deception?

How will we be able to judge the holy from the profane if godly character is not our plumb line? Remember, the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden did not appear evil—it was a type of good that wasn't from God. A righteous lifestyle helps each of us discern the difference between good and God and keeps us from making the same mistakes Adam and Eve did.

It's not wrong to promote ungodly ministers. Make no mistake about it: Our nation views anyone who is on Christian TV as an example of Christianity—as well they should! The problem is that some ministers who appear on television are not good examples because of their ungodly lifestyles. By supporting those who commit adultery, divorce their spouses and engage in sexual immorality, we promote these behaviors and encourage Christians as well as non-Christians to think they are OK.

John Paul Jackson is the founder of *Streams Ministries International*, a prophetic teaching ministry. A popular teacher and conference speaker, Jackson travels around the world teaching on the art of hearing God, on dreams and visions, and on the realm of the supernatural. He is the author of several books, including *Moments With God* *Dream Journal* and *Unmasking the Jezebel Spirit*, both from *Streams Ministries*.